



RIVER RHYMNEY TASK GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON MONDAY, 29TH MARCH 2006 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor R. Woodyatt - Chairman

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Councillor M.G. Parker, Mrs. A. Jones, Miss. H.C. Morgan

Environment Agency Wales

Mr. A. Robinson, Mrs. K. Bowen, Mr. R. Hughes

Rhymney River Federation of Angling Clubs

Mr. D. Roberts, Mr. B. Pritchard, Mr. R. Williams

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Bevan, Mr. S. Hill (Coal Authority), Mr. A. Brown, Mr. R. VanGemerem and Ms. M. Sutherland (CCBC)

1. MINUTES – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2006 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

2. WATER QUALITY UPDATE

Details of the water quality update were noted.

3. INCIDENTS ON DATABASE

Mrs. Bowen circulated a copy of the updated list of incidents reported to the Environment Agency during the period 1st January - 28th March 2006 and she and Mr. Hughes responded to queries raised on the information provided and confirmed the action being taken on each of the reported incidents.

4. MINE WATER CONTAMINATION AT TIRYBERTH

In the absence of Mr. Hill details of his report were tabled at the meeting.

It was noted that monitoring of the flows continues on a monthly basis (as detailed on the

circulated graph) and that the iron concentration remains at less than 5mg/l.

Members were pleased to note that there are ongoing discussions with the Property and Planning Departments of the county borough regarding the potential treatment site and that a ground investigation and topographic survey of the proposed site is planned to take place week commencing 3rd April 2006.

Mr. Roberts drew attention to the total flows as detailed in the appendix to the report and indicated that these statistics could impact on the size of the reed beds and where they are to be located.

5. CULVERT AT PONTLOTTYN

It was noted that the Draft Scoping Study into potential remediation of the minewater has been submitted by the consultants to the Coal Authority for comment. It has concluded that flows of minewater into the culvert average approximately 70 litres per second but has peaked at 157 litres per second. Iron concentration of the minewater is in the region of 4 milligrams per litre although the dataset is limited at this stage and that the preferred site is to the south of the culvert.

6. PROGRESS ON RIVERFLY MONITORING SCHEME

Mr. Roberts gave an update on the scheme and referred to the results which have been produced following the collection of the data. He pointed out that at present there is no direct comparison with similar river systems but anticipated that within the next few months, six sites on the River Sirhowy will be monitored and its data will provide the analysis required.

Mr. Roberts indicated that he had made a presentation to representatives of the Islwyn Federation of Angling Clubs and, as a result, monitoring will be undertaken on the river (via both the club and the county borough with Alison Jones and the Rangers taking an active part). He also anticipated a similar exercise being undertaken on the River Taff in the future.

He referred to an incident which had occurred in November 2005 whereby monitoring had identified a significant drop in invertebrates and half of the gamorous (which are used as part of the monitoring process) had been lost. It was noted that passive monitoring analysis had found significant levels of penitnerine (which is being investigated) present. Although this had affected certain invertebrates, other groups of insects which were in the egg stage rather than the lava stage had not been affected.

Mr. Roberts gave evidence of data collected at locations along the river and detailed its usefulness in determining areas for future redeployment of equipment and in recording the species which are being identified. He was pleased to report that there will be an article in 'Trout and Salmon' magazine this week on the work of the Riverfly Monitoring Scheme and Councillor Woodyatt indicated that it has also been reported at the Regional Flood Reference Committee and Biodiversity Sub-Committee where the work had been recognised as one of best practice.

Mr. Robinson commended the works which are being undertaken and indicated that the Agency will continue to target possible pollution sources with passive monitoring dye chasing and biological dips which will compliment the work of the Fly Life Team. He indicated that the Nant Melin will be targeted and there would be passive monitoring sites deployed at Bargoed in order to inform the existing database.

In noting that that the current data base can isolate incidents and identify the location from which they occur, Mr. Robinson confirmed that the samples collected during 2005 record levels which show that the catchment as a whole is improving and that further kick sampling in

April will provide more up-to-date information for assessment.

Mr. Roberts referred to the liaison with Mr. Robinson and to ongoing discussions in relation to the regeneration of the river by use of fly boards which will enable transportation to other sites in order to repopulate those areas as required and speed up colonisation in the sites which require it. It was noted that whilst this may be an interim measure there is a need to sustain the environment and that while there has been a gradual improvement over the last ten years in order to assist the recovery process it is still necessary to isolate and rectify black spots and ensure no further pollution occurs.

Members wished to place on record their appreciation to all those who are participating in the scheme which has resulted in significant data being produced to date and thanked Mr Roberts for his informative presentation.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN